

'I thought I was in love



...What a face!

EVER since Goldie Hawn, 44, filmed *Bird On A Wire* with Mel Gibson last year, she's been besieged by calls from girlfriends wanting to know what it's like doing love scenes with Hollywood's number one heart-throb.

"Everybody says, 'Oh my God, you worked with Mel Gibson,'" says Goldie, who hopes that co-starring with red-hot Mel will heat up her own faltering film career.

"For a while I thought I was in love. Just kidding — but what a face! I had trepidations because I thought he'd have no sense of humor or be stuck on himself.

"But Mel is bursting with humor and is very self-deprecating. I can't stand men who take themselves too seriously."

Mel, 34, returns the compliment. "Working opposite Goldie Hawn was a treat," he says. "She's spontaneous and funny."

While the two got on well on and off the set of this comedy thriller, filmed in Vancouver, Canada, both have rock-solid home relationships.

Goldie has lived for seven years with Mel's Tequila Sunrise co-star Kurt Russell and Mel is happily married with six children.

In *Bird On A Wire*, Mel plays Rick Jarmin, a former Sixties

radical living a secret life as a government-protected witness after blowing the whistle on two corrupt drug-enforcement agents.

Goldie plays Marianne, his ex-college girlfriend and now a lawyer, who thinks Rick is dead.

Then, 15 years after he disappeared, she pulls into a gas station and finds him operating the pumps.

As the old flame of love starts re-kindling, enter the bad guys — played by David Carradine and Bill Duke — out of jail and intent on killing the guy who turned them in.

This sets the scene for director John Badham to stage what will probably win this year's "most chases in a movie" award.

As Rick and Marianne flee the revenge-seekers, there are chases in cars, chases on motorcycles and another involving a plane and a helicopter. There's even a chase on a roller-coaster.

The showdown with the menacing rogue cops comes in a zoo, built from scratch on the Vancouver sound stage. And while the \$3 million zoo was strictly for the movie, there was nothing fake about the animals sharing the final scenes with Mel and Goldie.

Their fellow "actors" included six tigers, a lioness, three jaguars, a baboon, six chimpanzees, four alligators, a two-metre monitor lizard and a four-metre python!

Goldie got more than her share of scares during the filming.

She was chased by the baboon and a chimpanzee, had to walk over

a rickety bridge several storeys high and crawl across a narrow rafter 150 metres in the air.

Worst of all was the roller-coaster. She was so frightened of riding the roller-coaster that Badham limited her scenes to a small section of the track.

"They fork-lifted me up to the roller-coaster like a jackass," says Goldie. "I think I risked more doing that than if I had gone on the whole roller-coaster ride. Every fear I've ever had I've faced in this movie. I think I'm a new woman now. I can do anything."

Bird On A Wire was comic relief for Mel after his hugely successful *Lethal Weapon II*.

"The whole tone of this film is a lot lighter than *Lethal Weapon*," he says. "This is funny and warm. I've always been afraid to try things like that, but I thought I'd just dive in and see what happened."

Bird On A Wire was hammered by American critics when it was released in the U.S. last month. But moviegoers found the pairing of Mel and Goldie hard to resist and the movie took in \$15.3 million in its first weekend.

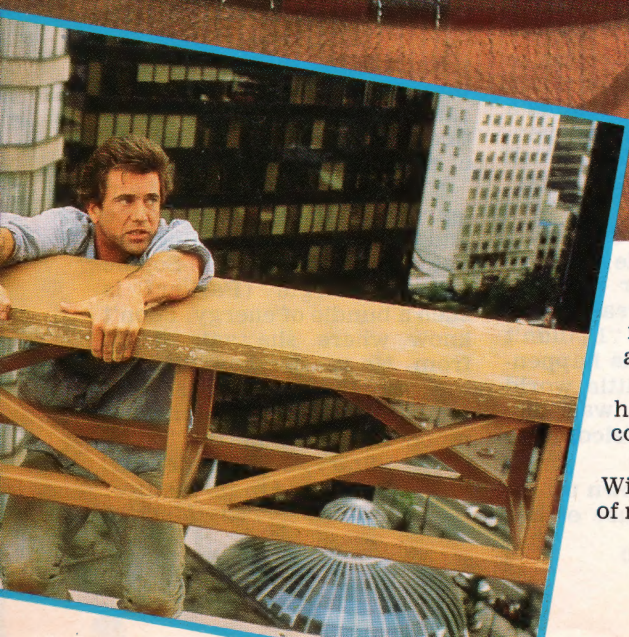
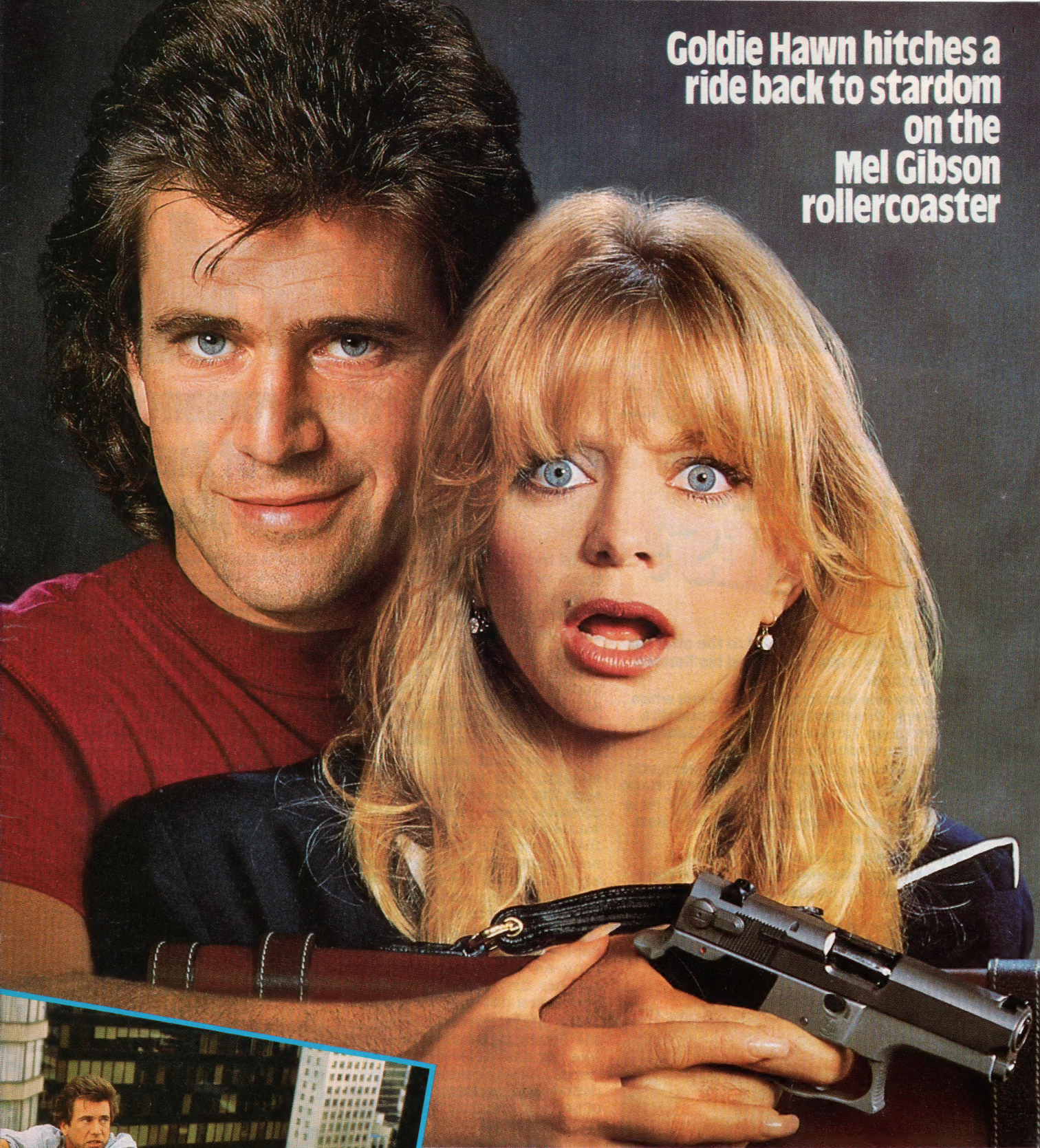
The reviewers accused Badham of making a predictable "formula" film with a hard-to-follow plot, too many car chases and too little sizzle between Gibson and Hawn.

"They don't set off any sexual sparks," says one critic.

Despite the bad reviews, Goldie says: "Our movie is

● Mel Gibson in a hair-raising scene from *Bird On A Wire* — canned by the critics after grossing \$15.3 million in its first weekend!

**Goldie Hawn hitches a
ride back to stardom
on the
Mel Gibson
rollercoaster**



about two people who are meant to be together. "It's not about deep-seated sexuality. It's about romance.

"This picture is good. It has bits of everything in it — comedy, action, romance."

Goldie has to like *Bird On A Wire*. It's carrying her hopes of making a comeback in films.

It's been 10 years since her last hit, *Private Benjamin*. Her other movies since then — *Wildcats* and *Overboard* — were flops.

But this time she has the enormous drawing power of Mel, whose last film, *Lethal Weapon II*, made \$147 million.

*From Neil Blincoe
in Miami*